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Security Information

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

OGC Has Reviewed

TO : MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD OR LOG

DATE: 26 February 1952

25X1

FROM : [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Strategic Services Unit

25X1
1. On February 11, 1952, [REDACTED] and the undersigned met 25X1A with [REDACTED], OSO, to discuss present SSU activities. The meeting was requested by OGC to clarify apparent misunderstandings, relative to the handling of SSU correspondence and related matters, that had become increasingly evident over a period of the past two months. Areas of responsibility for matters purely legal, purely administrative, the gray area between legal and administrative and BEC claims arising from OSS activities were discussed and mutual agreement found in accord with the established practices of the past year and a half.

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2. Rather than a lack of understanding due to a change in personnel or otherwise, the problem was found to lie in the fact that SSU matters are at present being handled by the Chief, Administrative Staff, OSO, [REDACTED] and his secretary, [REDACTED] on an additional duty basis, without other assistants. This situation has resulted in a heavy backlog of SSU correspondence and related matters due to the press of work of a prime nature. 25X1A

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3. This responsibility is placed with the Chief, Administrative Staff, OSO, in accord with [REDACTED] copy attached, which states under section 2, titled Procedure:

"All matters pertaining to SSU will be handled within CIA by appropriate organizational units. Correspondence pertaining thereto will be coordinated with and signed by the Chief, Administrative Staff, OSO, who is designated as the Executive Officer, Strategic Services Unit, for these purposes, with authority to act for and in the name of the Director, Strategic Services Unit."

This regulation has its roots in and is in accord with a memorandum from the Executive to the Assistant Director for Special Operations, dated 1 November 1950, wherein the Assistant Director for Special Operations was "charged with responsibility for remaining functions of the Strategic Services Unit until it is liquidated. He may delegate this responsibility within his office as he sees fit."

4. Were the above the only facts to be considered, the solution to the present situation would be evident. However, it was disclosed that no consideration has been given to the office or the persons, if any, who will handle SSU matters within OSO after the contemplated integration with OPC that is anticipated some two to four weeks hence.

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[redacted] feels that his office, after integration, will be out of the SSU picture.

5. In the past the continuity of interest and of personnel within OSO has been a vital factor in handling SSU matters. Persons were and are on board, within that division, who have first-hand knowledge of matters, which, to persons without that knowledge, would be nearly incomprehensible due to the oftentimes paucity of documentation. They are the persons that are best able to dig out the facts of any given situation, in order that a clear picture may be presented to the appropriate agency unit for a final determination or coordination. In this aspect, it is felt that no other division is in as favorable a position to continue this necessary and increasingly important work.

6. The continuing importance of SSU activities and files referred to, may be illustrated by: 1) the internal correspondence relating to a request from General Donovan for a list of OSS persons who have received decorations; and 2) the continued level of volume of SSU claims and requests for information. As is indicated by these random examples, the functions of SSU, assigned to the Agency as matters of internal concern by the memorandum of 25 October 1950 from Assistant Secretary Johnson of the Army to the DCI, have not decreased to the point of final liquidation or closing out of records, but rather have continued an even volume.

7. Based on the foregoing considerations it is recommended that:

1) due recognition be given to the importance of OSS archives files and SSU activities as is evidenced in the day to day progress of the Agency.

2) immediate plans be formulated for the continued handling of SSU matters within OSO, to be guided by persons with first-hand knowledge of the background and assisted by sufficient personnel to handle the work load.

3) consideration be given to a transfer of title, in legal concept, of the OSS records from the Department of the Army to CIA.

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OGC/JGO:imm
Attachment -

Distribution -

2 - OGC

*Item #3 to be held in abeyance in accord with
memo to sign from T.R.H. dated 27 Feb. 52.*

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